

A Twist on Screening

ACCESS

Summary

ACCESS is the largest Arab-American community non-profit in the United States. With 11 locations and more than 120 programs serving metro Detroit, ACCESS offers a wide range of social, economic, health, and educational services to a diverse population.

The ACCESS Colorectal Cancer Screening (CRC) Awareness Campaign is designed to provide bilingual and culturally appropriate education to low-income Arab American adults with limited knowledge of cancer morbidity and limited access to health care due to insurance. The program aims to increase the number of screenings among adults over age 50 and increase early detection of colorectal cancer.

Evidence Based Interventions (EBIs)

ACCESS focused on the following EBIs:

Reduce Structural and Cultural Barriers:

- ACCESS works to increase CRC screenings through community outreach activities and education on colorectal cancer prevention and detection.

Challenges

In the population that ACCESS serves, there is a stigma surrounding the topic of colon cancer and screening. Therefore, most outreach projects separate men and women when giving presentations.

However, during one such outreach program at a mosque, this was not possible and men and women were presented to at the same time. During the presentation, a male audience member became agitated that women were present and angrily left.

Solutions

Despite facing gender sensitivity and stigma surrounding screening, ACCESS continues community outreach and education to the community in order to reach individuals and continue to decrease the stigma surrounding CRC screening. Community outreach initiatives include giving presentations at mosques to both genders, highlighting the need for screening, and allowing those interested to sign up for screening at the end of the presentation.

Successes

During the mentioned outreach program, after the male participant angrily left the presentation, his wife approached and apologized on his behalf. She signed up for a FIT screening test. When she was called in to discuss her positive results, her husband came with her. He apologized for his behavior and agreed to do a FIT test as well. His results were also positive. Both were then directed to colonoscopies which showed benign polyps. This exemplifies the power of community outreach which can often overcome cultural barriers through education and lead to higher screening rates in disparate populations.

Sustaining the Success

Due to the nature of the community's culture and the stigma surrounding cancer and public offerings of services and recommendations, not everyone in the community appreciates CRC screening outreach. However, ACCESS continues to break these cultural barriers through education and screening and will continue to improve community screening rates one client at a time.

Results

Through persistent community education, ACCESS has successfully reached individuals within their community who often resist CRC screening due to cultural stigmas. ACCESS continues to see increases in colorectal cancer screening among its population.